

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /016 R

66011

DRAFTED BY S/S-O:LMACFARLANE

APPROVED BY S/S-O:LMACFARLANE

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P 011131Z SEP 76 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 216600 TOSEC 250022

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT TEL AVIV 5998 ACTION SECSTATE INFO CAIRO

1 SEP 76

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 5998

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS DIA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, EG, IS

SUBJECT: ISRAELI ACTION AGAINST AMOCO RIG IN GULF OF SUEZ

REFS: TEL AVIV 5991; CAIRO 11704

FOLLOWING IS COMPLETE ACCOUNT OF MEETING BETWEEN DATT AND
ARMY ATTACHE AND IDF INTEL REPS, INCLUDING CHIEF OF EXTERNAL
RELATIONS AND CHIEF OF NAVAL INTEL, NIGHT OF AUGUST 31-
SEPTEMBER 1 (2330-0030). IDF REPS STATED FOLLOWING:

A. THERE ARE SEVEN IDF PATROL CRAFT IN THE VICINITY OF THE
MARINER. SIX ARE ENGAGED IN ROUTINE TRAINING EXERCISE AND
ARE NOT CLOSE TO MARINER. ONE IS ASSIGNED TO MONITORING
MARINER ACTIVITY.

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B. MARINER ENTERED ISRAELI HELD WATERS AT 1110 LOCAL. AT

1245 IT STARTED TO PUT DOWN LEGS. BETWEEN THAT TIME AND 1500, THREE WORKBOATS WERE IN AREA AS WELL AS A HELICOPTER. THE MARINER ENTERED AND CROSSED GULF OF SUEZ MEDIAN LINE BY 1.3 MILES.

C. IDF PATROL CRAFT CAPTAIN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ORDERS FROM POLITICAL AUTHORITY, APPROACHED MARINER AND GAVE FOLLOWING MESSAGE "YOU ARE IN ISRAELI HELD WATERS AND ARE REQUESTED TO LEAVE". IN RESPONSE TO QUERY, IDF INTEL REP REPEATED THAT WORD USED WAS "REQUESTED". THERE WAS NO ULTIMATUM GIVEN BY IDF CAPTAIN AS TO TIME BY WHICH MARINER MUST MOVE OUT.

D. THE MARINER GAVE AN ANSWER AS FOLLOWS . . . "IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MOVE FOR EIGHT OR NINE HOURS".

E. THE IDF PATROL CRAFT THEN MOVE AWAY AND WAS GIVEN ORDERS NOT TO MOVE CLOSER THAN 2000 METERS TO MARINER. THE IDF CAPTAIN HAD ORDERS NOT TO MOVE OR SAIL IN ANY WAY WHICH MIGHT SEEM HOSTILE TO THE MARINER.

F. IDF REPS SAID THAT THIS TYPE CASE IS NOT NEW TO THE IDF, NOR IS IT NEW TO THE US. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE IN VIEW AS TO THE RECOGNITION OF THE MEDIAN LINE. NO EGYPTIAN WARSHIP HAS CROSSED MEDIAN LINE SINCE 1968 EXCEPT DURING OCTOBER 1973 WAR. ISRAEL AND EGYPT (THE LATTER BY DE FACTO RECOGNITION) DO RECOGNIZE THE MEDIAN LINE. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE 1973 WAR THAT AN OIL EXPLORATION SHIP UNDER EGYPTIAN CONTRACT HAS VENTURED EAST OF THE MEDIAN LINE AND STARTED DRIFTLING PREPARATIONS. IDF NAVY ORDERS ARE NOT TO PERMIT ANY FOREIGN VESSEL, NOT OTHERWISE AUTHORIZED, TO ENTER, DRILL, ETC., EAST OF THE MEDIAN LINE. THE IDF ORDERS HAVE NOT BEEN CHANGED IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS.

G. THERE ARE (2400 LOCAL) NO INDICATIONS OF ANY EGYPTIAN GUNBOATS IN THE AREA. IT WILL TAKE 5-6 HOURS FOR GUNBOATS TO REACH THE AREA FROM THE NORTH AND 3 HOURS FROM THE SOUTH. AT 0020 LOCAL, IDF NAVY INTELL STATED THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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NO EGYPTIAN GUNBOATS HAD LEFT ANY ANCHORAGE ON THE WEST SIDE OF SUEZ IN THE PAST SIX HOURS.

H. AT 0020 LOCAL, THE IDF PATROL CRAFT WHICH WAS MONITORING THE MARINER LEFT STATION AND JOINED OTHERS IDF PATROL CRAFT IN THE AREA. ALL ARE APPROXIMATELY FOUR MILES FROM THE MARINER.

I. THERE IS NO IDF INTENTION TO FIGHT EITHER TONIGHT OR AT ANY OTHER TIME. THE IDF DOES NOT FORESEE ANY CONFRONTATION EVENTUALITY. IF NO MARINER PREPARATIONS TO MOVE ARE NOTED BY MORNING, THE IDF PATROL CRAFT WILL SO REPORT TO GHQ.

J. COMMENT: IT IS OBVIOUS THAT IDF WAS IN INSTANT COMMUNICATIONS WITH IDF CRAFT IN VICINITY OF MARINER AT ALL TIMES, INCLUDING DURING LAST NIGHT'S MEETING. IT WAS ALSO OBVIOUS THAT IDF INTEL WAS COMPLETELY AWARE OF ENTIRE SITUATION CONCERNING MARINER WELL BEFORE QUERY BY DATT.

K. INLIGHT CAIRO'S 11704, ATTACHES ARE SEEING IDF AT 1100 THIS MORNING. THEY WILL DEMAND FULL EXPLANATION FOR APPARENTLY MISLEADING INFORMATION PROVIDED LAST NIGHT, PARTICULARLY ISRAELI ASSURANCE THAT NO ULTIMATUM HAD BEEN GIVEN TO MARINER. WE WILL REPORT RESULTS OF THIS MEETING LATER TODAY.
TOON
UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, SHIP HARASSMENT, EXPLORATORY DRILLING, OFFSHORE OIL FIELDS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE216600
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O:LMACFARLANE
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760331-1052
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t197609101/aaaadimk.tel
Line Count: 136
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 TEL AVIV 5991, 76 CAIRO 11704
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 JUN 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <06 OCT 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ISRAELI ACTION AGAINST AMOCO RIG IN GULF OF SUEZ
TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, US, EG, IS, AMOCO
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006